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PARKS AND RECREATION

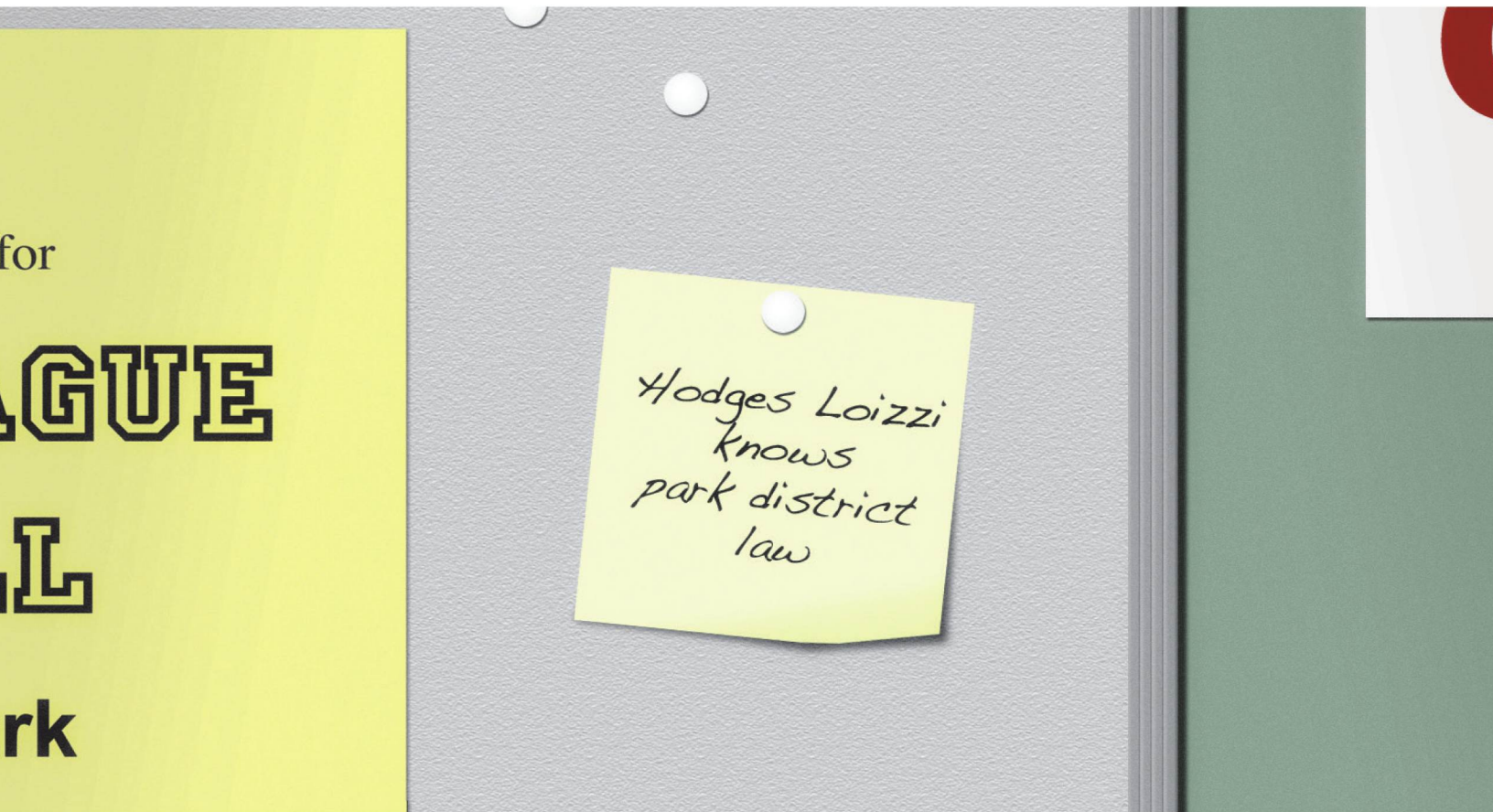
The magazine of the Illinois Association of Park Districts and the Illinois Park and Recreation Association



golf
issue

Strategic ways to restore the popularity – and profitability – of the game.

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FROM THE EDITOR

I was young when I first met my husband, Jeremy, and at the time, he wasn't involved in any sports. After we'd been dating for a while, he joined a golf league with some buddies from work. Eager to share this new sport, he took me out to a pristine patch of grass in my parents' yard (I mentioned I was *young*, right?). He carefully selected a club for me. Patiently, he explained all the fundamentals of the game.



With the late-summer sun setting in the distance, we worked on getting my feet shoulder-width apart. My body weight (less of it than there is now) was evenly distributed. I had a relaxed interlocking grip. I aligned my body to be square with my target, which was an open field far from the neighbors' windows. With bent knees and squared shoulders, I kept my eye on the ball and drew back the club for my first swing. SWOOSH. I searched the sky for the arching trajectory, curious to see the inaugural launch of my Titleist ball.

"I didn't see it land. Did you?" I asked him.

Jeremy stood silently for a moment. I understand that golf is a quiet game, but we were in my parents' backyard, not on some elite private course. That's when I noticed him staring intently at my feet where the ball remained unmoved.

With the patience and enthusiasm of a kindergarten teacher, Jeremy repeated all the steps in preparation for my second swing. And my third. After double-digit swings and no success in launching the ball, he finally sighed and put the club back in the bag. What felt like a long time passed before he finally said, "Maybe you can drive the cart."

His visions of co-ed golf leagues and color-coordinated sportswear (well, that second part was more *my* vision – have you seen those cute skirts the ladies in the LPGA wear?) were dashed that day.

Fast forward 15 years or so. We're married and have a beautiful daughter, Addison. For her first birthday, we bought her a colorful set of kids' golf clubs from the toy store. On the surface, it was a funny and playful homage to her dad's favorite sport. But on a deeper level, there was – and still is – an earnest hopefulness that someday they'll share the passion, enthusiasm and love for this sport that has brought him so much satisfaction each summer.

Jeremy will buy Addison her own clubs when she's old enough – the real, expensive kind, not the plastic ones. He'll take her out to one of the Springfield Park District's beautiful courses where they'll align her feet and square her shoulders. Maybe she'll make contact on her first swing and launch the ball onto the fairway. Or maybe not. Hit or miss, though, I'll be there driving the cart.

Best regards,
— LORI HARLAN

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WHO IS RUNNING YOUR YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAMS?

More and more recreation departments are "outsourcing" youth sports to organizations led by volunteers with little or no league administration experience. National Youth Sports Administrators Association (NYSAA) provides comprehensive training and benefits including insurance to these volunteers. It's all about keeping sports positive, safe and fun for the kids!




Visit nays.org/volunteer_administrators or call **1-800-688-KIDS (5437)** to learn how the NYSAA program can enhance youth sports experiences on YOUR fields.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR



The Illinois Association of Park Districts and Illinois Park and Recreation Association are seeking volunteers for Park District Conservation Day at the Illinois State Fair - **Saturday, August 18**. This event is one of the largest outdoor public awareness events for park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies.

Volunteers receive free parking and free admission to the Illinois State Fair on Saturday, August 18. If you are interested in volunteering, register online or download a registration form at www.ilparks.org. Click on "Calendar of Events" on the left, scroll down to August and click on "Park District Conservation Day."


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Peter M. Murphy
IAPD President and CEO

Making Connections

I recently had the opportunity to attend the National Recreation and Park Association's Legislative Forum in Washington, D.C. This is always a great opportunity to talk with members of the Illinois congressional delegation and their staff and undoubtedly a worthwhile commitment of time and energy. What became increasingly clear as we met with a number of legislative staff was that unless that staff member had an actual working knowledge of the park district's operation within the congressional district, there was a disconnect with their ability to understand both the scope and need of the request to fund not only the Land and Water Conservation stateside assistance portion of LWCF, but also the very importance of trail connectivity as had been provided through the Transportation Bill over the past number of years.

When making a request for assistance, you must ensure the individual you are talking to has a thorough understanding of the issues that affect park districts, forest preserves and recreation agencies.

I would urge you to invite not only your local state representatives and state senator for a tour of your park areas, but also your congressman and a member of their staff so that they can see and experience the value of park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts in the state of Illinois.

It is crucial to tell your story and highlight the tremendous services your agency provides to its community. Too often, boards and executive staff forget or fail to share the good news. Telling your story is critically important to the success of your agency and to the perception of your agency by members of the community, policymakers and lawmakers.

And so, I have the following recommendations:

- Tell your story in 2012. Set up a tour of your facilities and parks for lawmakers and members of the media. The Joliet Park District has done this with great success. Also, make sure that your legislators receive the agency's seasonal brochures and include them on your VIP community leader mailing list.

Connectivity is the
key to success.



- Extend invitations to your legislators to take part in anniversary celebrations, dedications, community festivals, parades, Arbor Day tree plantings, Earth Day events and other noteworthy events at your agency. Many times legislators will not be able to attend because of their busy schedule, but know that they appreciate you extending the invitation to them, and if they are available, particularly in an election year, they will want to attend.
- Agency anniversaries are a wonderful way to convey the value of your agency to the public and members of the General Assembly and Congress. The Park District of Oak Park recently celebrated its 100th anniversary and, indeed, 100 years of providing services to a community is a testament to the stability and quality of the park district system in Illinois.

2012 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April-May Flying 4 Kids Statewide Kite Fly	June 27 Good Governance Workshop Lewis & Clark Community College, Edwardsville
May 1 Parks Day at the Capitol State Capitol, Springfield	July 11 Solving "Board Games" – Building an Effective Board Buffalo Grove Park District
May 1 Legislative Reception Illini Country Club, Springfield	July 19 Legislative Golf Outing Bensenville Park District's White Pines Golf Course
May 2 Legislative Conference Crowne Plaza, Springfield	August 18 Park District Conservation Day Illinois State Fairgrounds
May 21 Summer Golf Tour Event #1 Kane County Forest Preserve's Settler's Hill Golf Course, Batavia	August 27 Summer Golf Tour Event #3 Zion Park District's Shepherd's Crook Golf Course
June 4 Summer Golf Tour Event #2 Wheaton Park District's Arrowhead Golf Club	September 17 Summer Golf Tour Event #4 Oswegoland Park District's Fox Bend Golf Course
June 6 Good Governance Workshop Schaumburg Park District's Golf Club, Schaumburg	September 28 IAPD Best of the Best Awards Gala Chevy Chase Country Club, Wheeling Park District
June 9 Good Governance Workshop Joliet Junior College, Joliet	October 11 Legal Symposium Hamburger University, Oak Brook
June 13 Good Governance Workshop Heartland Community College, Normal	October 16-18 NRPA Congress & Exposition Anaheim, California
June 20 Good Governance Workshop Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills	January 24-26, 2013 IAPD/IPRA Conference Hyatt Regency Chicago
June 23 Good Governance Workshop Rend Lake College, Ina	For the most up-to-date Calendar of Events, please visit the IAPD website at www.ILparks.org .

- It's also important to invite your legislators to activities being sponsored by the Illinois Association of Park Districts. This includes the Legislative Reception, which takes place in the spring of every year, and the Legislative Golf Outing, which will be held on July 18th in Bensenville.
- Create a forum for discussion or a legislative breakfast for legislators running for office in your area. This year, 13 legislative breakfasts took place throughout the state. They were filled with commissioners and professionals, as well as lawmakers, gaining a better understanding of what's being offered and what the issues are that impact parks, recreation and conservation in the state.
- Keep your legislator aware of issues that are unique to your district. If your agency is planning projects that need funding from the state of Illinois, host your legislator and take them to the site and show them exactly what is in your vision.
- Keep your legislator apprised of legislation by tracking it on the IAPD website at www.ILparks.org and remember, as well, that it's important to support your legislators at election time.
- While Illinoisans deal with the highest gas prices in recent memory and vacations have become cost-prohibitive for many families, more Illinois citizens will use their local parks and trails. As a consequence, the value of Illinois park districts, forest preserves and conservation districts has never been higher. Make sure your district is a good advertisement for parks, recreation and conservation. If your legislators believe that their local parks merit support, they will support local and statewide park issues and initiatives.

I am convinced that connectivity is the key to success, and I encourage your agency to embrace the exciting opportunity to make its services, facilities and parks well known to members of the Illinois General Assembly and to members of the Illinois Congressional delegation.



Healthy Lifestyles – At the Click of a Button

Medicaid accounts for a substantial portion of the state's budget, and the best way to reduce these bills and other health care costs is by promoting health and wellness.

In conjunction with this effort, the IAPD has unveiled *Healthy Lifestyles*, a new online resource that provides useful articles, links and tips about health, fitness and nutrition. As park, recreation and conservation agencies step up

to lead the fight against obesity and to encourage healthy living throughout Illinois, we encourage you to pull information from

Healthy Lifestyles to supplement health and wellness classes, use as filler in program brochures or post throughout your facilities.

In addition, you can add a *Healthy Lifestyles* section to your agency's website or Facebook page. Go to ILparks.org, copy the *Healthy Lifestyles* graphic, paste it to your agency's Facebook page or website and link it to ILparks.org to give your residents easy access to healthful tips to combat obesity and get fit. If you have information applicable to *Healthy Lifestyles*, please share it with us at editorialdept@ilparks.org. We'll be happy to add it to our growing library of information.



Jan R. Arnold
Executive Director, IPRA

IPRA Membership Survey 2011 - The Results

Members Are Our Business

IPRA worked with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Office of Recreation and Park Resources (ORPR) to conduct a member satisfaction survey in December 2011. The results are in, and Jarrod Scheunemann, ChungSup Lee, Robin Hall and Laura Payne, PhD from ORPR have written a summary report for your review.

Why Conduct a Membership Survey?

The mission of the Illinois Park and Recreation Association (IPRA) is to develop professionals to advance communities by providing the best parks, recreation and conservation resources and services. In the fall of 2011, IPRA collaborated with the Office of Recreation and Park Resources (ORPR) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) in an effort to help broaden the resources available to educate IPRA's members. The goal of the project was to create several white paper reports that provide IPRA members with useful information and potential solutions to specific trends and issues in the Illinois park and recreation field. In order to achieve this goal, IPRA conducted a membership survey to give all its members an opportunity to provide input into the present and future direction of their association. A secondary purpose of the survey was to collect information that would assist the IPRA Board of Directors and staff in decisions regarding association structure and the allocation of resources. Additionally, offering the survey two years after IPRA's 2009 membership survey allowed for better comparative analysis than the previous 13-year gap between surveys, and enabled the voice of IPRA members to be heard more frequently. This article, the first in a two-part series on the membership survey, will focus on the results. The second article, which will be available in the next issue of *IP&R* magazine, will feature a co-written directional response to the survey results from the IPRA Board of Directors and staff.

At initial staff meetings, IPRA and ORPR decided to host a series of seven inclusive, statewide focus groups which invited practitioners to direct and augment the questions proposed for the IPRA member survey. These regional focus groups were conducted during the fall of 2011 by ORPR staff who met with 57 practitioners representing 53 agencies, 21 professions and 7 regions of Illinois (South, Central, Northwest, South Suburban, the Western Collar Counties, Northern Cook & Lake Counties, and Central Cook and DuPage Counties).

The survey, as designed in partnership with these groups, had five main objectives: (1) to elaborate on the prevalent trends and issues identified by IPRA members in the focus groups and to identify how practitioners would prefer to be educated in these areas; (2) to distinguish the strengths and weaknesses of the association; (3) to identify what IPRA services were most utilized; (4) to better understand member satisfaction; and (5) to solicit general input and suggestions for improving the association.

Building on the framework of the 2009 IPRA membership survey, additional questions were formulated from the results of the seven regional focus groups. The 2011 questionnaire consisted of 32 questions. IPRA professional members were contacted via email on December 5th to announce the forthcoming survey and were encouraged to participate. An email was sent on December 7th to deliver the online survey to each of IPRA's 2,140 professional members. Two follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents to increase participation until the survey closed on December 15th. A total of 960 surveys were completed for a response rate of 45 percent.

Members Are Our Business



Key Survey Results

Survey responses have been beneficial in guiding the association's direction and valuable to IPRA in confirming what staff and board members have heard from practitioners in the park and recreation field of Illinois. The information below outlines the membership survey participant responses to the key questions of the survey.

What IPRA membership survey respondents value most about IPRA:

Top five most used IPRA services:

1. Annual conference
2. Education workshops/seminars
3. Job announcements
4. Website
5. Magazine

Top five most important services offered by IPRA:

1. Annual conference
2. Education workshops/seminars
3. Certification
4. Job announcements
5. Networking opportunities

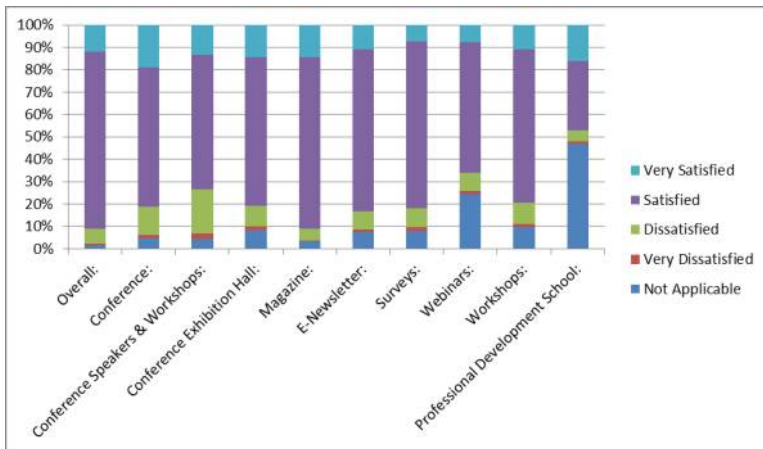
Top five most important reasons for joining IPRA:

1. Developing professional contacts; meeting others in the field
2. Continuing education through workshops and seminars
3. Showing support of the profession
4. Building a reputation/credentials in the field
5. (Tie) Keeping informed through the association publications: *IP&R* magazine, e-newsletter, website, etc.
5. (Tie) Employers pay the dues

Top benefits of serving in IPRA:

1. Networking
2. Professional growth

Participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction in the following categories. The highest percentages of responses are shown below:



What Were Some of the Concerns and Issues of Survey Participants?

The top five most important current trends and issues faced by IPRA survey participants were:

1. Lower staff morale and burnout
2. Americans with Disabilities Act compliance
3. Public perception of public/municipal employees
4. Economic downturn: participants have limited money for recreation and leisure
5. Inter-departmental relationships and communication

The top five activities and services that are supported/offered by survey participants' primary section that "need some improvement" are:

1. Workshops/seminars
2. Resource information (surveys, etc.)
3. Information regarding section activities
4. Opportunity for involvement
5. Newsletters

What new benefits and services should IPRA develop to make your membership more valuable?

Just over 20 percent of survey participants (196 participants) responded to this question. Responses provided 12 single-spaced pages of thoughtful ideas, including ideas on how IPRA can improve workshops, the annual conference and overall education. There were requests for help with trends and issues identified above, social media, and web technology; some respondents described issues regarding IPRA meeting, committee and workshop accessibility.

More than 73% of survey respondents stated that they have not served on an IPRA committee, board, or section board within the past three years. Listed below are the top five reasons participants gave for not serving.

The top five reasons for not serving in IPRA are:

1. Lack of time
2. Never been asked
3. Travel cost to attend meetings
4. Do not have the desire to serve
5. Do not feel I know enough about the organization to get involved

Conclusion:

Several important impressions can be drawn from the results of the 2011 IPRA membership survey. First, IPRA membership survey respondents were satisfied with the work of IPRA as a whole. Second, networking, the annual conference and educational opportunities were very important components of IPRA to participants. Third, judging by the time spent on written comments, participants showed they believe their opinions are valued and that they are passionate about their field and their organization. Fourth, it should be noted that volunteering to serve for IPRA boards, committees and sections is down by 18% in the last 15 years. Lastly, participants provided many good ideas, from ways to improve conference and workshops to requesting help with various areas of concern.

Many thanks to those who were willing to take the time to participate in the focus groups and complete the membership survey. The contributions gave great insight into what action steps IPRA should take. The next article in this two-part series will highlight how IPRA will use the results in the development of services and in determining what type of resources to provide. Be on the lookout in the coming months for white paper reports from the Office of Recreation and Park Resources targeting the specific trends and issues highlighted by survey respondents.

One of the areas identified as an opportunity to improve was courses offered at the IAPD/IPRA Soaring to New Heights conference. Based on over 1,000 survey respondents, it appears that the course selection and presenters this year added to the improvement that our members were seeking. Overall conference experience rating of either 'extremely satisfied' or 'very satisfied' combined increased from 62% in 2011 to 67% in 2012.

IPRA continues to look at ways to help our members Learn.Connect.Inspire.

Thanks again to the staff of ORPR and to each of our members for your involvement!

- Jan R. Arnold, Executive Director, IPRA

For a complete list of IPRA's educational offerings, visit ILipra.com and choose Educational Calendar under the Education tab.



Jason Anselment
Legal/Legislative Counsel

Remind Lawmakers That Park and Recreation Agencies Save Money and Generate Revenue

For several years now, the State's budget problems have dominated discussions at the Capitol. Proposed cuts to human services and health care and threatened closures of correctional and mental health facilities are in the headlines almost daily. We heard similar discouraging news from the federal government during the recent National Legislative Forum in Washington D.C.

Cuts to core services and health care are difficult, so lawmakers will be looking at every option to prevent or reduce these cuts. Accordingly, it is critical to remind lawmakers that it would be shortsighted to curb investments in parks, recreation and conservation during these tough budget times because those investments are helping to solve the very budget problems with which lawmakers are struggling.

Indeed, Illinois' park districts, forest preserves, conservation, recreation and special recreation agencies do far more than just provide fun places for leisure activities. While your agency certainly improves the quality of life within its community, it also saves state and federal government tax dollars for health and human services while generating additional tax revenue for their budgets through job creation and tourism promotion.

Here are some of the messages that IAPD needs you to help deliver to legislators so that they understand just how critical local park and recreation agencies are to solving their budget challenges.

MEDICAID AND RISING HEALTH CARE COSTS

The economic cost of treating our society's health care problems is staggering. This fiscal year, the State will spend roughly \$15 billion on Medicaid funding. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity alone costs our country as much as \$147 billion in increased medical expenses every year. In other words, healthier societies are not just happier, they are less costly for families, businesses, the health insurance industry and the government.

Those in the park and recreation field recognize that the best way to reduce Medicaid and other health care costs is through prevention, starting with daily exercise. There are plenty of facts and figures to support this proposition. IAPD is cataloging many of them on its new Healthy Lifestyles section of the website, and others are available through resources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

These studies also help highlight the significant role that park and recreation agencies play in solving the national health crisis. For instance, one study demonstrates that children who live in greener environments weigh less than children who live in less green areas.¹ Another has found that children who have easy access to playgrounds are approximately five times more likely to have a healthy weight than children who do not.²

In other words, communities must have easy access to recreational facilities in order to improve health and wellness and save money. Illinois' park and recreation agencies not only provide these facilities, but they offer thousands of programs to promote healthier lifestyles and avoid expensive medical costs. If we are to control health care costs that are causing budget problems, it is critical that we continue to invest in parks, recreation and conservation.

There may be no better message for park and recreation agencies to deliver to legislators at this time, so make sure you are making this a part of your agency's story.

STATE FACILITY CLOSURES & THE COST OF CRIME

The State's prisons and youth detention centers are expensive to maintain and closures are planned. After school and summer school programs like those offered by park and recreation agencies reduce crime, which, in turn, reduces the demand for costly correctional facilities. Crime prevention is also a cheaper solution than fighting crime by hiring more law enforcement, prosecutors and judges.

Park districts are a main provider of these programs and reduce the demand for costly correctional facilities. Make this connection for legislators and local leaders within your communities who struggle with the cost of public safety.

HIGH GAS PRICES

Fuel prices continue to thwart our full economic recovery. Lowering demand is one way to lower price. One study has found that a single mile of urban trail can save up to 6,000 gallons of fuel consumption annually by providing alternative modes of transportation.³ Road and bridge maintenance are also much more expensive for the government to maintain than trails.

Park and recreation agencies maintain mile upon mile of trails, but federal and state governments should be investing more in these resources – not less – during tight budget times.

WATER QUALITY

The Environmental Protection Agency has estimated the cost of providing safe drinking water to be \$140 billion over the next 20 years.⁴ An effective way to ensure the long-term protection of water supplies is through the preservation of open space.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Flooding has cost Illinois almost \$1.25 billion in property damage and more than \$550 million in crop damage over the past 20 years.⁵ Worse yet, 27 people lost their lives due to flooding during that time. Open space conservation is a cost-effective remedy to preserve the environment and to mitigate flooding. Park, recreation and conservation agencies maintain hundreds of thousands of acres of open space.

AIR QUALITY

U.S. urban park trees alone remove an estimated 75,000 tons of air pollutants annually. This translates into an economic benefit of \$500 million every year.⁶ Without our local park and conservation agencies, there would be many fewer trees from which to reap these benefits.

DECLINING PROPERTY VALUE

Home mortgage foreclosure is not the only negative consequence of the housing crisis. Homeowners throughout our state have seen the values of their homes decline. Park and recreation facilities can help reverse this trend. In fact, one study has found that parks can increase property values by up to 20 percent.⁷

TELL YOUR STORY NOW AND THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Park and recreation advocates are fortunate to have the opportunity to deliver positive messages during tough economic times when many have reason to be pessimistic. Lawmakers who face the daunting task of finding ways to balance their budgets through difficult cuts in core service areas will likely welcome suggestions for positive solutions to those budget problems.

Now is the time to make sure our leaders recognize that the benefits of Illinois park, recreation and conservation agencies reach far beyond leisure opportunities and are helping to mitigate some of the state's budget costs and generating additional budget revenue through job creation and tourism promotion.

¹ Bell, J., Wilson J. Liu, G. 2008. Neighborhood Greenness and 2 Year Changes in Body Mass Index of Children & Youth. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*. 35(6): 547-553.

² Potwarka, L.R., Kaczynski A.T. & Flack A.L. 2008 Places to Play: Association of Park Space and Facilities with Health Weight Status among Children. *Journal of Community Health*. 33(5): 344-350.

³ See Miami-Dade County Trail Benefits Study: Ludlam Trail Case Study

⁴ See Illinois State Land Conservation Funding Study by the Illinois Environmental Council Education Fund in partnership with the Nature Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land. March 2007

⁵ See Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute at <http://webra.cas.sc.edu/hvri/products/sheldus.aspx>

⁶ Nowak, D. Heisler, G. 2010. Air Quality Effects of Urban Trees and Parks. National Recreation and Park Association.

⁷ Harnick, P., Welle, B. & Leenan, L. 2009. Measuring the Economic Value of a Park System. The Trust for Public Lands.

CPI Rate for 2012 Extensions is 3.0%

The IAPD has received many inquiries regarding what Consumer Price Index (CPI) "cost of living" or inflation percentage to use in computing the 2012 extensions (taxes payable in 2013) under PTELL.

Section 18-185 of the Property Tax Code defines CPI as "the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for all items published by the United States Department of Labor." This index is sometimes referred to as CPI-U. Section 18-185 defines "extension limitation" as "the lesser of 5% or the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index during the 12-month calendar year preceding the levy year" (emphasis added).

For 2012 extensions (taxes payable in 2013), the CPI to be used for computing the extension limitation is 3.0%. The CPI is measured from December 2010 to December 2011. The U.S. City Average CPI for December 2010 was 219.179 and 225.672 for December 2011. The CPI change is calculated by subtracting the 2010 CPI of 219.179 from the 2011 CPI of 225.672. That amount, 6.49, is then divided by the 2010 CPI of 219.179, which results in 3.0% CPI.

Information on PTELL may be accessed through the Illinois Department of Revenue's website at www.tax.illinois.gov under the category of "Property Tax," then look for the "Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL)" option.

Year	December CPI-U	% Change From Previous December	% Use for PTELL	Levy Year	Year Taxes Paid
1989	126.1	--	--	--	--
1990	133.8	6.1	5.0 (5% Max)	1991	1992
1991	137.9	3.1	3.1	1992	1993
1992	141.9	2.9	2.9	1993	1994
1993	145.8	2.7	2.7 (5% for Cook)	1994	1995
1994	149.7	2.7	2.7	1995	1996
1995	153.5	2.5	2.5	1996	1997
1996	158.6	3.3	3.3	1997	1998
1997	161.3	1.7	1.7	1998	1999
1998	163.9	1.6	1.6	1999	2000
1999	168.3	2.7	2.7	2000	2001
2000	174.0	3.4	3.4	2001	2002
2001	176.7	1.6	1.6	2002	2003
2002	180.9	2.4	2.4	2003	2004
2003	184.3	1.9	1.9	2004	2005
2004	190.3	3.3	3.3	2005	2006
2005	196.8	3.4	3.4	2006	2007
2006	201.8	2.5	2.5	2007	2008
2007	210.036	4.08	4.1	2008	2009
2008	210.228	0.1	0.1	2009	2010
2009	215.949	2.7	2.7	2010	2011
2010	219.179	1.5	1.5	2011	2012
2011	225.672	3.0	3.0	2012	2013

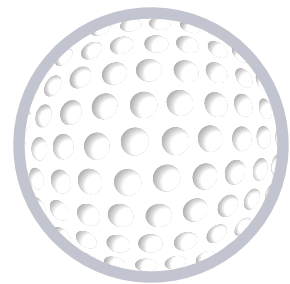
Referenda results are available online at ILparks.org under Public Policy/Advocacy Resources/Referendum Results



BY CHUCK SZOKE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHANNAHON PARK DISTRICT

EVEN ON THE SUNNIEST OF DAYS, DARK CLOUDS CONTINUE TO HOVER OVER THE GOLF BUSINESS. ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION (NGF), THE NUMBER OF GOLFERS IN THE U.S. FELL FROM A HIGH OF MORE THAN 30 MILLION IN 2003 TO BARELY 26 MILLION IN 2010. THE NGF REPORTS THAT WHILE THERE WERE 1.5 MILLION FIRST-TIME GOLFERS AND ANOTHER 2.1 MILLION PLAYERS WHO RETURNED TO THE GAME IN 2010, THOSE GAINS WERE OFFSET BY MORE THAN 4.5 MILLION GOLFERS WHO LEFT THE GAME THAT YEAR – A NET LOSS OF ALMOST A MILLION PLAYERS.

Golf is a fun game that can be played throughout one's lifetime; it instills strong values, gets people outside to recreate and can generate significant net revenues for our agencies.



Rounds played fell nationwide by 2.3% in 2010 compared to 2009. Among those who were surveyed by NGF and reported a barrier to playing more golf, time was by far the number one response.

Golf is a fun game that can be played throughout one's lifetime; it instills strong values, gets people outside to recreate and can generate significant net revenues for our agencies. So how can public golf courses restore golf to its former popular and profitable status?

One way is to introduce and then provide additional opportunities for youth golfers. Agencies without a golf facility can work in partnership with a neighboring public agency course or a privately owned facility.

At the Channahon Park District's Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club, staff program a number of youth-oriented golf opportunities.

SNAG® Golf

In 2012, Heritage Bluffs and Channahon Park District staff will collaborate to offer a Starting New at Golf (SNAG®) program. SNAG® introduces youth to golf using equipment and lessons developed to make learning the basics of the sport easy and fun. The program will be targeted to first-time golfers ages 5 to 8 years old.

The equipment allows for a full range of golf shots, from driving to putting. Only two clubs are used: the "Launcher" and the "Roller". New golfers learn the concepts of holding and swinging the club. A SNAG® golf program does not require a golf course, so the program is available for any park and recreation agency.

In addition to youth, SNAG® markets their learn-to-golf programs to seniors and the disabled who wish to take up the game for the first time.

Sticks for Kids

The National Recreation and Park Association and the Golf Course Builders Association of America Foundation offer grants to park and recreation agencies to participate in Sticks for Kids. Free golf equipment and lesson plans are used to introduce and foster interest in the game among youth. The availability of free rental equipment, sized for youth golfers, removes the majority of the expense barrier to get started in the game.

U.S. Kids Golf Foundation

With the assistance of the U.S. Kids Golf Foundation, Heritage Bluffs established a kids course. Markers on the cart path direct golfers to tee locations in the fairway that allow for play at an appropriate distance. A kids course scorecard was also developed. Kids Course tee markers are set flush in the ground, so they do not impact play or course maintenance.

While the back tees at Heritage Bluffs create a 7,171 yard challenge, the Kids Course length is 2,252 yards from the Green tees, and 3,720 yards from the Yellow tees. The course is recommended for beginning players up to age 14.

U.S. Kids Golf Foundation has a proprietary line of golf equipment developed for youth available for resale and sponsors a tournament schedule.

The Foundation also works with the PGA to create a PGA Family Course Program. The initiative is under the PlayGolfAmerica program, which was developed and is supported by the PGA, PGA Tour, LPGA, and USGA. PlayGolfAmerica has several other youth and family golf initiatives available at www.PlayGolfAmerica.com.



Junior High School PE Unit

Each fall, 8th grade students from Channahon Junior High School participate in a physical education unit at the course. School buses transport the kids to the course for three hours of instruction over a two-week period by Heritage Bluffs professional staff and volunteers.

The students are divided into stations at the practice range, putting green and chipping/bunker green, and they rotate to each location. The unit concludes with a three-hole game using the greens in the practice range fairway. For the majority of the kids, it is their first exposure to golf at a golf course.

An annual grant from the People for Channahon Parks Foundation offsets the staff expense to conduct the program.

Get into Golf

Kids 16 and under playing with a paying adult play for free any day after 5:30 p.m. A free warm-up pail of practice balls is also included. In 2011, more than 300 youth took advantage of the opportunity to get on the course and play with a parent or older sibling at no cost.

Junior Golf Program

A Junior Golf instructional program for kids ages 7 to 14 meets in six-week sessions through the season. Instruction by Heritage Bluffs staff and volunteers includes the proper swing, chipping, putting, scoring and general on-course etiquette. All Junior Golf participants receive a discount on practice range balls all season and a golf cap.

Junior Golf League

Junior Golf participants can 'graduate' to a Junior Golf League programmed at Heritage Bluffs, for players 13 to 18 years old. The competitive league has participants play nine holes each week on Monday afternoon through the summer. A two-player team scramble event and post-match cookout, where each player can bring a guest as their partner, culminates the season.

High School Golf Teams

Heritage Bluffs serves as the home course for the Minooka High School Girls and Boys Golf teams. In addition to scheduled practices and matches, team members receive discounts on green fees and practice balls throughout the year. The teams play some 500 practice and match rounds annually and hit more than 600 pails of practice balls.

Hosting the golf teams includes the benefit of exposing Heritage Bluffs to other high school golfers – and their parents – as they compete in the matches and often come out for a practice round before a Conference or Regional match.

The First Tee


In addition to the programs in place at Heritage Bluffs, several Illinois communities participate in the First Tee Program, a World Golf Foundation initiative. The First Tee seeks to use golf and character education principles to provide youth of all backgrounds with lifelong values of sportsmanship, honesty and integrity.

Will the next generation of golfers be enough to build the future of the game, as the huge bubble represented by the Baby Boomer generation eventually retires from playing? By developing and expanding golf opportunities for youth and young adults, park and recreation agencies can play critically important roles in building and strengthening the game for decades to come.



Golf Courses CARVED FROM Quarries

BY DAN MARTIN AND HELENE BERLIN



The US landscape is pockmarked with quarries that are abandoned or being slow-walked to eventual closure. The re-use potential, especially parks and recreational re-use, of quarries can be extraordinary. The Lake County Forest Preserve District redeveloped a quarry into its Independence Grove facility – one of its most popular. West of that facility in Crystal Lake, quarries near downtown have been converted into a series of fishing and recreational lakes. Parcels around those lakes are now being used for various real estate developments.

Quarries start out on the edge of town but often are subsumed by urban or suburban sprawl, and they can end up being prime locations. Across Illinois, this is the case. Many Illinois rivers have quarries nearby as stone, sand and gravel are easily and cheaply shipped by water. Follow the I&M canal on a Google map from Lemont to LaSalle, Illinois. You'll be surprised by the multitude of quarries along the Des Plaines, Fox and Illinois Rivers. In the core of metro Chicago, there are quarries with potential for re-use visible along I-55, the Stevenson (the late John Husar of the *Tribune* envisioned these as an urban fishing oasis). There are quarries along I-88 in Aurora and North Aurora, one on First Avenue, Riverside, just south of the Brookfield Zoo, and the most famous is the one that I-294 passes through in East Hazelcrest.

From apartment complexes in Boston, X-games-type venues near Hartford, shopping centers in New York, cinema complexes in Chicago, and zoos, sunken gardens and theme parks in San Antonio, to waterparks in California, quarries are being profitably re-used across the land.

But golf? Why not? By the 1980s, a number of abandoned quarries were being converted into demanding and beautiful golf courses. There may be engineering challenges to reconstructing a quarry into a golf course in a Midwestern landscape of prairie courses, but the special characteristics of a quarry can become distinctive features for a golf course.

Quarry terrains are unlike those of woods and fields. There may be some very attractive features like high quarry walls, rock outcroppings, cliffs, streams and deep-water lakes, shots over gorges, fossils visible in the quarry walls and even "Industrial fossils" – large remnants of mining equipment – which can be incorporated into the course design.

Here are successful examples, including one in Illinois, to consider:

In Channahon, Illinois, about 50 miles southwest of Chicago, Heritage Bluffs, a 166-acre public golf course that opened in 1993, sits on an old sand and gravel quarry. The

Channahon Park District purchased the site with specific plans to turn the quarry into a golf course and to design it naturally, retaining the site's woods, wetlands and mined areas. With the quarry terrain, the course's scenic views are unlike most Chicago-area golf courses.

The course designer fit the course to the site's natural characteristics, instead of forcing a design on the site. The build-out of the course was done responsibly from an environmental viewpoint: Clay from the site was used to line the lakes, and the site's black dirt became topsoil for the golf course. The spoil piles were left largely intact for use in defining and separating fairways and to minimize soil erosion.



Granite Links Golf Club, Quincy, Massachusetts, is just seven miles from downtown Boston. As construction began on Boston's famous/infamous "Big Dig" – putting the city's central expressway underground – some of the former quarries were filled

with excavated soil and reshaped into the Granite Links Golf Club. The 250-acre semi-private course took 15 years and \$130 million to develop, and used approximately 1,000 truckloads of Big Dig soil. Granite Hills offers great views of the Boston, Boston Harbor and the Blue Hills (nature) Reservation.

The Bay Harbor Golf Club, Bay Harbor, Michigan, is located about 65 miles northeast of Traverse City in a large resort that stretches along five miles of Lake Michigan frontage. Bay Harbor Golf Club, a semi-private club, was built on the site of a former limestone quarry and cement factory at the former industrial site.

Since it opened in 2009, the quarry has been considered the most challenging and is the most photographed of the Bay Harbor's three courses. Holes 5 through 9 feature gorges of 40 feet, a 50-foot-high stone cliff, a waterfall and natural ponds. Hole 7 features a tee shot over a 60-foot-wide gorge. Golfers finish the final holes along the Lake Michigan shore, where the first holes are located.

The Quarry at Giants Ridge, Biwabik, Minnesota, is part of a two-course (the Quarry and the Legend) club in the northern forests of Minnesota near the Chippewa and



Superior National Forests. The 18-hole Quarry course sits on land that was once rock quarries and sand and gravel mining operations. A good number of deep sand-filled bunker hazards are incorporated in this course, which also features wetlands, forests and some dramatically elevated tees. The 7,000-yard course opened in 2003, six years after Giants Ridge opened the Legend course.

Rock Hollow Golf Club is putting Peru, Indiana, on the map. Opened in 1996, the golf club was created on 300 acres of a mined-out gravel quarry. Located about 70 miles southwest of Fort Wayne, the course makes full use of its natural advantages including mature trees, eye-catching rock formations and wetlands. Golfers play on a variety of elevations, some as much as 60 feet below ground. The terrain is unusual for normally flat north central Indiana. One noteworthy hole, No. 2, has a large water hazard, a large fairway bunker and a two-tiered green at the finish.

Built in and around an old sand quarry, Scotland Run Golf Club is located in New Jersey, 20 minutes from downtown Philadelphia and 45 minutes from Atlantic City. The public club is an 18-hole course, more than half of which is built on an abandoned sand quarry. Eleven of 18 holes run along, around and through the quarry. Above the quarry is heavily wooded land; other natural features are rolling hills and 10 acres of water. Golfers play past an abandoned crane and two detached crane buckets. A crane sits just above the quarry near the 8th fairway, and the 16th hole is on the quarry floor where players hit shots next to and around rusted-out steam shovels.

The course at the Westin La Cantera Resort in San Antonio, Texas, is the first of two great quarry courses in that area. The name La Cantera (which also refers to the larger mixed-use development of shopping centers, residential subdivisions and recreational venues) means “rock quarry” in Spanish. Just as neighboring Six Flags Fiesta Texas incorporates quarry walls as part of roller coasters rides, the Westin La Cantera Resort Course offers golfers the opportunity to take shots from the tops of quarry walls and enjoy views of limestone cliffs thanks to the successful integration of the natural terrain into course design.

Like the La Cantera courses, San Antonio's Quarry Golf Club, which opened in 1993 and is located about 25 miles southeast of La Cantera, was designed to take advantage of a quarry setting. The second nine holes are in a former rock quarry that supplied much of the concrete used to build the growing San Antonio. Golfers play through a course where 100-foot rock walls line the fairways on three sides. At the 17th hole, a shot over a ravine challenges players.

Fossil Trace Golf Club in Golden, Colorado, opened in 2003 on the site of a former clay quarry known as the Parfet Clay Pits. The quarry, bordering the Rocky Mountain Front Range, was owned and operated by the Parfet family from 1877 until 2001 when they donated 52 acres to the city of Golden. A public 18-hole golf course was designed around and through the former clay quarry – a design which includes vast sand traps more than six feet deep. Large remnants of the clay mining equipment are incorporated into the course design.

The quarry era is modern compared to Fossil Trace's souvenirs from prehistoric times. Visible triceratops footprints and those of other prehistoric creatures dating back more than 400 million years ago are visible along the course. As the course's website puts it, people are playing the golf course “approximately 64 million years after the first dinosaurs walked where holes 11 through 15 now sit.” The clubhouse features an exhibit detailing the history of the property and information about the dinosaur tracks and other impressive fossils uncovered on the course.

These courses from coast to coast illustrate how quarries can be recycled into unusual and distinctive courses.

Illinois has hundreds of quarries that are – or will soon be – available for conversion to a new land use. Park districts, forest preserves and recreation agencies should consider taking on these properties for many different recreational uses, but when demand and revenue justify it, we encourage them to take a shot at golf.

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D O W N E R S G R O V E

A PLACE IN AMERICAN

GOLF

HISTORY

Est.



1892

BY BRANDI BECKLEY,
DOWNERS GROVE PARK DISTRICT

St. Andrews, Scotland, is known around the world as the home of golf, and there is plenty of information on the history of the sport before it arrived in the United States. But you might be surprised to learn where *America's* first 18-hole golf course was built – right here in Illinois, in fact, right outside of Chicago in Downers Grove. The legendary Chicago Golf Club was established in 1892 by a group of Chicago businessmen on the site of the current Downers Grove Golf Club. The founding father of the Chicago Golf Club was Charles Blair Macdonald who was, according to *Golf Journal*, "a true and imposing pioneer of golf in America." Macdonald has been credited with greatly influencing the establishment of the United States Golf Association, the development of golf course architecture in America and "defending the faith" as taught to him at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews in Scotland.

“The Downers Grove Park District is proud of its piece of golf history. Golf enthusiasts and historians alike can see where it all began, and experience it for themselves.”

Early in 1892, Macdonald, motivated by England's Sir Henry Wood, Commissioner General to the Chicago World's Fair, persuaded 30 of his Chicago Golf Club colleagues to contribute \$10 each to design and construct a nine-hole golf course. The site chosen was a 60-acre stock farm owned by A. Haddow Smith. A. H. Smith was a Lanarkshire golfer who had immigrated in 1890 to the United States from Musselburg, Scotland, where the game of golf was first played in 1774. When Smith heard of Macdonald's plan, he enthusiastically offered his land as the location for the new golf course.

The golf course was completed and ready for play in the late spring of 1892. When the inaugural season ended, MacDonald convinced Chicago Golf Club members to add nine more holes to the course. Therefore, in 1893, the first 18-hole golf course in the United States was established on this site. By 1895, Chicago Golf Club members had become so taken with the sport that they decided to build a new 18-hole golf course on 200 acres of land located near Wheaton, Illinois. The Chicago Golf Club is still in existence there today.

From 1895 to 1968, the site of the Downers Grove Golf Club was owned by several different individuals, known as the Illinois Golf Club in the late 1890's, and then operated under the name of Belmont Country Club. In 1968, the course was purchased by the Downers Grove Park District for \$750,000 and was renamed the Downers Grove Golf Club.

The Downers Grove Park District's Administrator, Dan Cermak, has a deep appreciation of the historical value of this course. As the Director of Facilities and then Deputy Administrator from 1978 to 1996, Cermak assisted in the design and construction of its fourth and current 4,000 square foot clubhouse. Both the original and second clubhouses were destroyed by fire, the first in the 1920's and the second in 1976. Cermak has compiled a collection on the history of the course, which is on display in the clubhouse. In an interview with NBC's Phil Rogers in May 2010, Cermak explained, “Changes to this course have occurred through the last 110 plus years; however, much of the original course remains including holes 2, 4, 7, 8 and 9.” Major renovations and upgrades to the course, including the addition of a driving range, rebuilt greens and new tees and fairways were made throughout the 1990's.

The course even has a historical connection to the Titanic. One of the original Chicago Golf Club's founding members, J. Arthur Ryerson, was a delegate to the organization meeting of the USGA on December 22, 1894, along with Charles B. Macdonald. Arthur Ryerson died when the Titanic sank in 1912. Arthur's son, John B. Ryerson, his wife and two daughters were among the survivors.

Over the years, the course has hosted golf greats including Lee Trevino in a pro exhibition appearance at the golf club before he played in the Western Open in Oakbrook in 1975. This year marks the 120th anniversary of this historic course that boasts mature trees, rolling hills and water on seven out of nine holes. In May, the club will host the All American Hickory Open. The course will be set up for “gutta percha” style golf using turn-of-the-century hickory-shafted clubs. Participants from around the world will compete, using pre-1900s era equipment in a two-day, 36-hole tournament.

The Downers Grove Park District is proud of its piece of golf history. Golf enthusiasts and historians alike can see where it all began, and



experience it for themselves. Visit the Downers Grove Golf Club located at 2420 Haddow Avenue. Tee times are accepted seven days in advance for Fridays through Sundays and holidays. Call 630-963-1306 or visit www.dgparks.org to book online.

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GROWING THE GAME OF

GOLF:

A Community in Transition

by Bill Clevenger, Rick Anderson & Lisa Gillen, Decatur Park District

Setting the Stage

At the height of the golf boom in the 80s and 90s, Decatur was home to a thriving 5-course public golf system that exceeded all expectations for a community of 91,000. In the ensuing years, the Decatur Park District's courses began to experience the fallout of national golf trends and significant local impacts such as an aging community, declining population and low average household income. Industrial downsizing and plant closures also affected golf participation. This “perfect storm” created a daunting challenge for the Decatur Park Board and staff.

For the past decade, we have strived to respond proactively to our ever-evolving golf market. In a strategic effort to “right-size” the program and attract new golfers, the district closed a languishing Nelson Park Golf Course, which saw just 14,000 rounds per year and converted a small, 9-hole facility to a unique, Prairie-style signature course – Red Tail Run Golf Club by Raymond Floyd – which has attracted an average of 26,000 rounds per year since its opening in 2006. Partnerships with Decatur Memorial Hospital (golf platform partner) and Ameren (First Tee sponsor) provide a valued financial boost while collaboration with the Decatur Area Convention and Visitors Bureau contributes to the attraction of more than 300 average Stay & Play rounds each year. Earthmover Credit Union is a new presenting sponsor for our weekly Family Night programs.

Highlighting a Great Golf Product

The Decatur Park District's three golf clubs – Hickory Point, Scovill and Red Tail Run – are award-winning courses that have attracted national and state tournaments. Red Tail Run is the site of the IHSA Class A Girls' State Golf Tournament. Hickory Point Golf Course is the longest-running host of the Symetra Futures Tour, the developmental tour of the LPGA. Hickory Point also hosts the IHSA Class AA Girls' State Tournament and has been site of the PGA of America Junior Golf Series, NCAA Division III National Golf Championships for Women, Illinois Women's Golf Association's Senior Open and Decatur Junior Open. Scovill Golf Course was twice named a Top 100 Women-Friendly Course by *Golf for Women* magazine and earned distinction as the #1 Public Course for Customer Loyalty by the National Golf Foundation (2009).

Decatur's golf staff has embraced a district-wide customer service model to make visitors feel welcome and appreciated. Golf specials during non-peak hours, online tee times and attendance at three annual golf shows to attract out-of-town golfers have proven extremely successful. But the question remained how to better target our potential markets and infuse new enthusiasm into an already excellent golf system. The answer lay in the new PGA of America Golf 2.0 program.

The goal of Golf 2.0 is to grow the number of golfers, rounds and revenues: something courses across the state are striving for.

"Golf 2.0 is about you being uniquely qualified to make golf experiences memorable, valuable and fun," said PGA President Allen Wronowski. "It's about you being the center of your golf community and about maintaining your core customers, engaging lapsed golfers and driving new players."¹

The plan starts with a review of community demographics, including average income, unemployment, age range and ethnic/gender breakdowns. The data and insights gained from this research will help the district focus its efforts and shape a new golf strategy. Then the search will begin for "latent demand" for golf – in businesses, clubs, schools and senior groups. Finally, a review will be conducted of the competition, including other golf courses and alternatives for leisure-time activities.

In February, the Decatur Park District golf and marketing staff conducted a SWOT analysis and brainstormed ways to embrace Golf 2.0 to meet the needs of core golfers, engage lapsed golfers and attract new golfers, including women, families, juniors and seniors. The Decatur Park District's repackaging process was formulated, and we are now on our way to making golf more attractive, more personal and more welcoming to everyone in the greater Decatur community.

Meeting Core Golfers' Needs

Challenge: As league members and regulars, core golfers are the bread and butter of our courses, and their satisfaction is critical. These golfers enjoy the game and feel at home at our courses, but they express irritation at slower play by visitors, newcomers and those who don't know every bounce and undulation of the courses like they do.

Solution: The Decatur Park District has engaged the PGA's Tee It Forward program, which encourages golfers to move up a set of tees to speed play. In a survey reported on the Play Golf America Tee It Forward website, 70% of respondents said they had more fun; 47% played the game faster; 91% reported they would Tee It Forward again; and 52% said they are likely to play golf more often because of the positive experience.³ This spring, the Decatur Park District's golf pros are also educating leagues and course rangers about Tee It Forward to quicken the pace and enhance the experience of all golfers on the course.

Challenge: League members express frustration at playing the same 9 holes each week.

Solution: Staff plans to alternate 9's each week, giving the leagues the weekly change of scenery and challenge they desire.

Engaging the Lapsed Golfer

Challenge: Lapsed golfers are those who have played in the past but, for a variety of reasons, (new job, children's activities, loss of interest) have stopped coming to the course. This group encompasses a number of demographic groups.

Solution: The Decatur Park District's spring initiative is "Welcome Back to Golf." An afternoon Welcome Back event will take place at the driving ranges at Hickory Point, Red Tail Run and Scovill in mid-April. Golf pros will be on hand to offer tips, provide free range balls and introduce the district's newest golf programs to those who have played in the past and want to return to the game. Another aspect of the Welcome Back program is packaging our new "Get Golf Ready" instruction series, including Ladies Only Clinics, Adult Golf Clinics,



Short Game Clinics, Family Night/Pro Tips and Family Weekends. A short course will also be created at Scovill, with holes ranging from 90 to 190 yards. The low fee (\$9 for 9 holes) and shorter length will allow beginners, seniors, juniors and families to enjoy a quick, more relaxing round. Other opportunities to attract lapsed golfers include rules and etiquette refresher cards and a Summer Blow-Out Sale on clubs and merchandise.

Attracting New Golfers

The audiences from which we hope to attract new golfers will vary by age, ethnicity and gender. Our goal will be to engage students, young professionals, minorities and seniors by providing specialty clinics, holding league member/guest events and increasing our outreach efforts to introduce individuals to the game.

The Decatur Park District's youth programming is already extensive, and students of all backgrounds and skill levels enjoy lessons at our courses, the Boys & Girls Club and at schools and community centers. We partner with Decatur Public School District #61 to provide the First Tee National Schools Program at two elementary buildings, as well as Starting New At Golf (SNAG) at four middle school and high school after-school programs. First Tee activities are open to the public and offered year-round. Our LPGA/USGA Girls Club targets young ladies; junior tournaments provide opportunities for more competitive players; and need-based scholarships ensure that all youth may participate, regardless of ability to pay. Family offerings include Play Golf America's Family Golf Month, Bring Your Kids to the Range Day, Take Your Daughter to the Course Week and PGA Free Lesson Month. New initiatives will include a collaboration with park district partners and local corporations to encourage minority golfers and young professionals to give golf a try.

Reaching Out

Enhanced marketing efforts will be crucial to our success. In addition to print ads, radio and TV commercials, billboards and email blitzes, the Decatur Park District has added social media outreach, with web pages (www.golfdecatur.com), a Facebook page and Twitter account. A recently designed Golf Decatur mobile app will provide online tee times, pin locations, course fly-overs and a "Round the Turn" snack menu for current and future golfers. To build our email list and offer an added bonus, we have started a Golf Decatur Birthday Club, which features a free round of golf during the individual's birthday month. Those with winter birthdays may play a round at our DISC indoor golf facility or play outdoors at any time during the season.

Looking Forward

As we emerge from the recent economic crisis and a decade of "right-sizing" efforts, success in the Decatur Park District's golf system will depend upon on a new data-driven, customer-focused approach. The ongoing challenge will be to grow our player base while remaining cognizant of fiscal constraints. Even in the face of public criticism, our board and staff must take into account national, state and local economic realities in order to sustain – and grow – our golf programming and the Decatur Park District system as a whole.

Resources

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2. Play Golf America. "Tee it Forward: Play Faster, Have More Fun." 29 Mar. 2012. <http://www.playgolfamerica.com/index.cfm?action=teeitforward>.

The Decatur Park District staff who contributed to this article include: Bill Clevenger, Executive Director; Rick Anderson, Director of Golf; and Lisa Gillen, Director of Marketing.



PEOPLE & PLACES

Photo courtesy of the Wednesday Journal and Frank Pinc.



Balling Retires from Park District of Oak Park

Park District of Oak Park Executive Director Gary Balling retired April 30, following 12 years of service to the Oak Park community and more than 35 years as an IPRA professional. In addition to his service in Oak Park, he also worked at the Naperville Park District, Northbrook Park District, St. Charles Park District and

Morton Grove Park District. Gary served as the Board Representative to the IPRA Recreation Section for two separate terms and served as chairperson of numerous IPRA committees and an active member of many others. He was named the Oak Park Villager of the Year in 2008 and was the recipient of the IPRA Professional Recognition Award in 2000 and the IPRA Recreation Section Outstanding Recreation Professional Award in 1999.



Cermak Retires from Downers Grove Park District

Dan Cermak retired from the Downers Grove Park District effective May 31, following a 34-year tenure. During his service to the park district, Dan played a key role in advancing the agency's services, programs and facilities including a new golf course driving range and learning center in 1994, a new golf course clubhouse in 1995, plus the rebuilding of all greens,

tees, bunkers and the reconfiguration of the course in the early 90s. In 2003, the construction of the Recreation & Fitness Center and the William F. Sherman Jr. Interpretive Center was completed along with multiple land acquisitions at Lyman Woods.

Elmhurst Leadership Transitions: Grodsky Retires, Rogers Promoted



Richard D. Grodsky retired in March 2012 after more than 15 years with the Elmhurst Park District and 37 years in the field. Grodsky began his career in 1970 and served various communities in the Chicago area including Evanston, Chicago, Dundee, Morton Grove and Park Ridge.

During his tenure in Elmhurst, Grodsky led the agency in creating new facilities, programs and strategic planning which have garnered state, regional, national and international recognition. Awards include Nations in Bloom, IPRA's Best Facility Design and

NRPA's Healthy Community Award to name a few. Rich has served on various committees including Chair of Joint Legislative Committee and Great Lakes Regional Council. He has worked with the Illinois General Assembly on various pieces of legislation important to parks and recreation, helping to advance the profession in Illinois. He has also earned several state awards, including the Robert Artz Professional of the Year. He has been a guest speaker on the local, regional and national levels on various park and recreation trends and issues.



James W. Rogers was named Executive Director of the Elmhurst Park District in March. Rogers, a 21-year veteran in the field of park and recreation management, is exceptionally well prepared to lead the Elmhurst Park District because of his experience in all facets of operations, knowledge of budgetary issues and his expert understanding of organizational behavior and planning.

Jim has served the Elmhurst Park District since 1994 in a variety of positions including Director of Recreation and Director of Park and Recreation Services prior to his appointment as Deputy Director of Parks and Recreation in 2006. His tenure at the district affords the park board and community a key ingredient - corporate memory and continuity - which has helped him hit the ground running as new Executive Director. The board noted that Jim has been part of the Elmhurst Park District's success as an organization.



Downers Grove Park District Announces New Executive Director

The Downers Grove Park District Board of Commissioners is pleased to announce the appointment of William G. McAdam as the new Executive Director of the Downers Grove Park District. McAdam, a

resident of Lemont, was the Executive Director of the Oswegoland Park District, a position he held since 2003.

McAdam has more than 20 years of experience in park districts. At Oswegoland Park District, he oversaw the tremendous growth of the park district including 945 acres across 57 parks including the Fox Bend Golf Course, two aquatic facilities and a museum. He is an accredited Certified Park and Recreation Executive by the National Recreation and Park Association.

The Downers Grove Park District used IAPD's Director Search Service to fill the vacancy.



Clark Named Executive Director at Palatine

The Palatine Park District has hired Michael Clark as the district's new Executive Director. Clark replaced Ron Gbur who retired in March.

"He is a highly-qualified individual with many years of experience," said

Park District Board member Sue Gould. "We're confident that he will do an excellent job as our newest executive director."

Clark had been the Executive Director of the Batavia Park District since 2000. He has a bachelor's degree in park and recreation administration from Illinois State University and an MBA from Lake Forest Graduate School of Management.



In Memoriam: Betty Chestnut Irons

Betty Chestnut Irons of Northbrook, formerly of Flossmoor, died at home on April 1st as a result of lung cancer. Throughout her life, Betty was a strong advocate for civil rights, women's rights and nature conservation.

Betty was the first female president of the Illinois Association of Park Districts. She was also a visionary on the board of the Flossmoor Park District in the late 60s who realized that two small park districts, Homewood and Flossmoor, could accomplish more by working together.

She was married to Spencer Irons for more than 54 years, and the couple donated the land now known as Irons Oaks Environmental Learning Center.



Champaign Park District Announces New Superintendent

John (J.R.) Pope from Richmond, Virginia has joined the Champaign Park District as the new Superintendent of Planning and Operations. J.R. has extensive experience in parks and recreation, most recently having

served as Director of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities in Richmond, Virginia. He was also the State Park Chief of West Virginia State Parks and Forests, and Superintendent of Park Maintenance and Operations in both Jefferson City and Columbia, Missouri. J.R. will oversee all activities in park planning, development, maintenance, landscape and horticulture within the Champaign Park District.

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During the NRPA Legislative Forum, IAPD leaders including Immediate Past President Wally Frasier, President/CEO Peter Murphy and Legal/Legislative Counsel Jason Anselment met with Representative John Shimkus to discuss key issues including the land and water conservation fund, as well as the importance of including funding for trail access in the pending transportation legislation.



As part of the NRPA Legislative Forum, a group attended the weekly Illinois Breakfast for Senator Dick Durbin on March 29, 2012 in Washington DC. From left to right: from the Addison Park District, Tim McKinnon, Commissioner Tom Reed, Executive Director Mark McKinnon, Senator Durbin, Oak Lawn Park District Commissioner Donna McCauley, Executive Director Maddie Kelly and Board President Gary Callahan.

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.

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